By Their Fruits ye Shall know them

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Published by:

C. W. Friesen
Roblin, Man.
Canada

BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM
Printed by:
Prairie View Press
Rosenort, Man., Canada R0G 1W0

FOREWORD

This article of doctrinal content with a somewhat historical flavor appeared in installment form in some old German copies of the church periodical, *Botschafter der Wahrheit*, in the year 1900, under the title, "By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them". It was the interest and concern of Brother C. W. Friesen that this writing by the late Brother Peter Toews should be made available to the English reading public of today; and upon his request several brethren have worked at this translation, endeavoring to retain as accurately as possible the meaning and spirit of Brother Toews. The account of how the Mennonites of Holland fared, after persecution ceased, is a translation from the Dutch by Blaupot into the German by the writer of the article. The remarks by the translator, appearing in *italics* are personal remarks by Brother Toews. The decline of true spirituality in the church after the cessation of persecution and how the Mennonites fared in this respect in Holland, Prussia and Russia is traced by the author by also making reference to, and using quotations from other writers. Brother Toews' concern also was to maintain a purity in teaching and practice of scriptural doctrine. His convictions are clearly and emphatically expressed relative to the doctrine of one united body of believers who have come into this undivided fellowship by the same rule and are of the same mind; "namely the rule of the new creature" (Galations 6:16).

The translation is not a perfect work; but our concern nevertheless is that the readers may find this account, by the late Brother, interesting and profitable.

Otto Isaac

By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them

Matthew 7:16-20

By Peter Toews

In addition to a translation from Blaupot's Dutch, I intend to, God willing, write something for the *Botschafter* under the above title. With preceding remarks, that with fruits not only works, as fruit of the Spirit and works of the flesh are meant (Romans 6:19-23), but also fruitbearing works in enduring labor for the Lord; (Jer. 17:7 & 8-10) as also follows in the gospel age: "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit (John 15:5). With "fruits that remain" (also "meat . . . unto everlasting life" John 6:27) we can also include what Paul writes: the believers are his joy, glory and crown (Phil. 2:1 & 1 Thess. 2:19, 20), namely as his children awakened by his labor and influence, whom he as a spiritual father has begotten (1 Cor. 4:15) and by instructing them in the truths of the gospel, cared for them as a nurse cares for her children (1 Thess. 2:7) and brought them up unto the Lord. This could already be counted as fruit, and with an enlightened eye recognized as those, of whom we read Rev. 22 as trees yielding fruit every month; that is, continually, and whose leaves have healing qualities.

In reference to the above: "He that abideth in me, . . . and every branch that beareth fruit, . . ." we also find the contrary in the Word, of which John writes: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us (1 John 2:19).

An instructive account translated into German from the church at Gröningen, Holland now follows:

If we want to apply the words of our Lord Jesus: "By their fruits ye shall know them," to the Anabaptists then we can harbor no other but favorable opinions. Just like the reformation in general aspired more to the purifying of the disposition; among the Anabaptists an inward sanctification, through godly rebirth, was the essential point which, from the beginning, they were striving for. They particularly

endeavored to do away with morally corrupting abuses and implant simple, domestic, likewise leading virtues. They believed to gather from the sayings of the Lord Jesus and the apostles, the doctrine, that the discipleship of Jesus should be the ideal of a fellowship of saints. They believed that the early Christians also faithfully endeavored to live up to this ideal.

Of the testimonies, given by others, concerning the Anabaptists we will, from among others, mention only the one from Benthem, 1698. "Although we should guard against the errors of these people much good can be learned from their way of life, such as humility, contentment, moderation and above all love for the poor; for how deserving of praise the Netherlandian reformed in general are for their kindness to the needy; nevertheless this virtue is a characteristic in which this sect excels above others. Above all, these people hold to a conservative manner of dress, although there are some in Amsterdam who are more forward with wearing of wigs and other worldly attire. In Friesland as in Gröningen you see them dressing in simplicity." *Taken from Benthems Kuch und Schulenstaat 1 Part, Page 834*

The wearing of wigs, if the hair were too short (1 Cor. 11:14) had at that time (today it is cutting the hair) according to worldly fashion become so wide spread, that certain Synvels formed regulations to combat this trend; such as the Reformed Synvel of South Holland in 1640, likewise at Hoorn in the following year, and later still others.

The Old Flemish in general lived most conservatively for a considerable period of time. Among the Swiss, who especially distinguished themselves by their domestic virtues, customs and habits were no less strict and simple; according to evidence from a Manuscript: "Life details of a Swiss Anabaptist of Kampen in 1735 shared by honorable A. Doijer of Amsterdam. When he wanted to change his place of residence to Zwolle, his family considered such a move as a step toward destruction. His father had worn a long beard all his life, laces in his shoes, and hooks and eyes on his clothes. 'The dangers to which I was exposing myself, of deviating from this manner of dress and even from the church, were pointed out to me. I came into great trials about this. I went to God for refuge and prayed for light, as to what to do in

this situation. Finally I decided to go trusting that which is essential to serving God is not dependent on outward things. I realized that my mode of dress would run the risk of change because no one in the city dressed the way I did. I was so insistent that my guardians finally consented to my going. After I was residing in Zwolle I soon changed my way of dress although my heart remained unchanged; but it would have been very desirable if my spiritual condition would have improved more. After some time I was privileged to visit my friends at Kampen. I did not want to act the hypocrite and went to Kampen with buckles on my shoes and buttons on my white coat. But I will never forget, the first meeting with my friends and particulary my aunt, who wept bitterly over me, her nephew, the only child of her sister. For by then I was considered eternally lost. The day ended with little respect for my person; being regarded as one who had launched out into the world toward his temporal and eternal ruin.' "

The same spirit of simplicity, of customs and habits, was dominant among the Swiss brethren of Gröningen and Sagemeer, throughout the former century. They also continued living humbly in the fear of God and considered eternal salvation entirely dependent on such an attitude, as a writing by Jan von Komen indicates, "Confession of Faith, etc., Gröningen, 1744." *Salvation dependent on the fear of God and simplicity according to the mind and spirit of the apostle Paul, (2 Cor. 11:3) has its proper place.*

They endeavored, with greatest conscientiousness, to maintain such lowliness of mind and sought to remain free from defilement of the world. Because of this they were sometimes called "hard headed" and consequently many for fear of this name accepted worldly practices, particularly as they were enjoying a time of quietness and were not living in fear of persecution. Yet they had the reputation of being respectable, honest and trustworthy, and loaned one another large sums of money with only a record of the amount without further securities.

In Sagemeer in the vicinity of Gröningen the homes of the Swiss Anabaptists are still (1784) easily recognized by their plain colors and simple arrangement. In the same year there were still seventy men in this province who held to the

custom of wearing the beard. *A custom consisting of allowing nature according to God's creation run its course, and not as the creature saying to his creator: "What makest thou?" (Isaiah 45:9)and in this way strive with his Maker.* Presently there are only a few who have not completely discontinued this practice.

There is another quality, worthy of notice distinguishing the Anabaptists in their mode of thinking and disciplined life which identifies them with the early Christian Church. It was the standing rule as in Overyszel likewise in Gröningen, and possibly in other places, that all the sick whether more or less wealthy were attended through the night in turns by two members of the church, the women by the sisters and the men by the brethren. This gave the necessary direction that the poor and needy were supported and mutually helped, refreshed and comforted. Although I can find no definite record of other places during what time this was the practice, I hear this information from a reliable source, namely from records by the honorable P. Beets of Amela, that this was still the custom at Campen in the year 1700.

The old Flemish, who belonged to the Gröningen community, and who comprised by far the largest number of Anabaptists at this time, were certainly no less simple and steadfast than the others in the 17th century, as is obvious from a regulation concerning dress and house decoration, etc., formed at Loperfum the 10th of April 1659.

Because some of the readers of the Botschafter der Wahrheit claim to be descendants from the old Flemish according to nationality, also according to doctrine and religion, which is also clear to me. the question comes to me concerning the above named regulation: Should I or should I not translate it and let it appear in the Botschafter? In the first place we could then draw a comparison how we in the Spirit of Christ have to wage the same battle against the spirit of the time like our forefathers did. Then also the generation growing up could see that we are only following in the footsteps of our fathers (who also in this respect walked in Christ's footsteps and with Paul forbade wearing of jewelry, worldly hair styling and such like) as running within the bounds of the gospel, and not wanting to allow the spirit of the world to enter the church, if we do not want to allow or tolerate the wearing of ornaments on the body

and other things which are embraced only for the lust of the eyes and the flesh and become habits only for the sake of pleasure. For all that we do in word or deed shall be done to the glory of God.

The report of discussions during a general conference held by the old Flemish at Gröningen in 1738 supplies important information concerning the consequent changes that had taken place. We find among the reports of that year a reliable manuscript whereby I am able to share several details concerning this meeting.

The ministers were not unaware that gradually a more liberal spirit and greater conformity with the world were also becoming evident among the members of their fellowship. This aroused great concern, and at this meeting the concerned persons seemed to have particularly expressed themselves. Hendrick Berends of Tewearthe introduced the subject. He pointed out how a Christian is supposed to be like the salt of the earth and a light of the world; like their fathers had constantly endeavored to be found. Gradually however, manifold deviations had taken place, and consequently in 1718 it had been considered necessary to have an admonition against this worldly-mindedness printed and circulated among the congregations. But there was not much fruit in evidence from these efforts; there still is a slackness in attendance of worship services; there still is conformity to the world in houses, furnishings and numerous digressions in many places, and one in no way proves oneself to be a follower of the lowly Jesus.

Because the seriousness of the situation made a deep impression, Tiete Popkes of Humsterland asked: "What then can be done about this?" Steven von Delten remarked thereupon that the matter could also be viewed too unfavorably. The interest in this good work is indicated by the assembly itself who have unanimously gathered (with the exception of one congregation who have sent no letter or delegate). One should not take too rigid a stand on many outward things but above all keep in view the spirit wherein we are active. Otherwise he agreed that much decline was perceptible in customs, practices and morals; he deplored the death of Alle Dirks who had constantly been a pillar for their faith and life.

To Albert Tobias Kramer von Geuns the mentioned dif-

ficulties were much weightier. He also mentioned the point of marrying out, and that they might be more careful in this. At Geuns there was a case with a sister in the church, who had been warned against such marriage, and who had been refused communion after it took place; meanwhile the practice of the avoidance of the expelled one was left up to the individual according to how each one understood the Word of God in his own conscience. *Then it is no wonder that the party who held to the truth did not share in these shallow ideas.*

After a lengthy discussion (not without differing opinions) the conference settled for the resolution from Geuns, and Hendrick Mertens of Sagemeer added that the expelled members in general were visited too infrequently by the ministers; whereas Paul teaches: "Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (2 Thess. 3:15).

Generally it was considered good to recommend this as a responsibility to the assembly.

Pieter Poekus of Gröningen voiced his concern about the evident decline in faithfulness in word and keeping promises to the reproval of the church. Not enough effort was put forth to settle existing disagreements resulting in resentment, hateful bitterness and loveless expressions, etc. Jan Kriyns of Bierum made a proposal to forbid the old Fleming ministers to preach in congregations of other denominations, but this was not acceptable. *The old Flemish held to the teaching of the grounds of one united church and baptism the longest.*

Thereupon Aldert Sierts Dyck of Gröningen spoke. He had also noticed with regret, decline in many areas. Above all it depended, said he, on a change of heart, otherwise they would not gain anything with outward restrictions. He made a motion that the bishops should visit all the congregations annually and interview the ministers as well as the members. Thereupon he wished that the situation of each congregation be laid on the hearts of its ministers. In the practice of their religious responsibilities such as praying, fasting and alms giving, etc., they should seek the glory of God and not their own praise. He was immediately supported by Hendrick Berends and Tiel Popkes. Hendrick Berends made some remarks concerning the worthy commemoration of holy communion, and Teunies Freerks of Gröningen remarked: that on the whole a more proper preparation should be con-

sidered. Then Hendrick Berends touched on the convictions of the ministers.

They should, he said, not only admonish to faith and conversion, but must also themselves be converted if their endeavors should produce results. Dyck's motion was unanimously accepted. Lubert Egger of Uithuizen and Simon Ylst had complaints concerning the great ignorance sometimes evident among the young people. The minutes of these instructions were now read and their great importance emphasized by Hendrick Berends, also by Harm Scholtens of Gröningen. Dyck made some corrections relative to this point, which were accepted. After this subject was concluded reference was again made regarding the decay in religious custom and practices. Some ministers were of the opinion that there was no point in making any other resolutions except those already moved by Dyck. They allowed it would be desirable to arrest the decline but saw no other remedy except personal example and sincere admonitions. On the whole they wanted to have warnings given against all severity and harshness. The bishops likewise saw difficulty in applying special disciplinary measures. They should certainly not yield to the spirit of the times but caution should be exercised so as not to cause division in the fellowship through harsh or hasty action. However each one should present these considerations to his local congregation and in particular emphasize the taking into consideration of the teaching of the fathers: warning should be given against conformity to the world, against marriages outside of the church, against dishonesty and against all partiality and lovelessness between brethren.

This opinion prevailed though some would have preferred to have the matter dealt with more seriously. They wanted to see excommunication and avoidance restored in full measure. Care must be taken that the Church of God remain a clean, pure and unspotted flock. Church discipline had become altogether too slack for it should be outwardly apparent that they were God's children and that between the children of light and the children of this world there should be no fellowship. Whereas Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem riding on the lowly colt of a donkey, his followers are competing in splendid and colorful riding equipment. Whereas the apostles said: "Silver and gold have I none," their

followers wear it on their bodies for display. Thus all humble Christian spirit (they said) is lost. What would our fathers say to this?

These speeches were listened to with attention, for they came not only from men who were known as zealous and for themselves radical professors, but they found responses in the conscience of each present member including those who for themselves thought more liberally; yet they knew that one should not offend a weak brother. The men fully realized the great importance of the results of such a resolution and the consequences it might have in the church. But they apparently considered the unconcerned ones, who held less closely to the fellowship, as weak brethren, instead of the scrupulously conscientious and sensitively-concerned souls. Dark clouds were perceived in the spirit of the time and a falling away was feared. But outward restrictions should not be the reason that would cause division. Therefore the majority decided to endeavor above all to influence the convictions of the members according to the opinions of H. Berends and Dyck. If it were possible to bring them back to a pure Christian childlike spirit, could they be aroused anew to zeal and consideration, could their thinking be turned from worldliness and fastened on what alone is important, then the spiritual strength would be renewed, in which the true strength would be renewed, in which the true strength of the fellowship had always consisted. This method should be tried and if this effort failed then they could consider what disciplinary measures to employ.

We must return to the point that the formed resolutions had brought no satisfactory results. Ten years had gone by and everything had remained the same if not become worse. In 1748 a conference was held in Gröningen, in which it was considered good to make another effort. After extensive deliberation on November 13 a motion was finally made that someone should outline a plan concerning the matter for presentation the following morning, to be included in the reports so that it would come to the attention of the church. This was done.

Who penned this composition is unknown to me but it can be found in the year blz. 9 and after. It was immediately considered good to have this article printed separately and copies distributed because the reports though also printed,

other did not get into many hands. Consequently it appeared with the title: "Short Presentation concerning the decay and improvement of practices, besides other items, treated at the general conference of the Anabaptists now held in Grönigen in November 1748, for closer meditative consideration, hoping that it will benefit the church, especially recommended to the Anabaptists."

This article fully agrees with the minutes of the discussions except that in conclusion the ministers are urged to constantly present the matter to the congregations, and should preach Christ crucified and him only, and that they should devote themselves to more generally have instruction classes for children and young people. Further we find nothing which also came into greater consideration with the members than the ministers, except the encouragement for better observation of the day of the Lord (Sunday).

Later the attention of the meeting was directed away from this point by the activities they had in various years with the election of bishops and drawing up a confession (of faith). In 1754, however, the matter was again mentioned with regrets that the article of 1748 had not yet brought the desired results, but there was a continuous departure from living and observing the faith, whereof luxury, lightmindedness, lawsuits, quarrels and the like were all too much in evidence. *The lukewarm sentiment of the aforementioned conference of 1748 hardly allowed the expectation of other results.* Consequently the ministers were repeatedly encouraged to warn against this, which again happened in 1755. The time had apparently come when such warnings and encouragements did not do much good. The Anabaptists also experienced the influence of the spirit of the times, and after the middle of the eighteenth century they underwent continual changes in their opinions and way of life. Church discipline fell into a deep slumber and the door was opened for marriage outside of the church, feet washing was discontinued, the manner of dress became totally conformed to the world. Government office was no more avoided but much rather sought after. Military service itself gained access in the years of unrest, by no means compulsory, but voluntarily with the organization of patriotic parties. Walter ten Cate influenced many to refrain from these activities but after his death no one arose among the old Flemish to take a firm stand for such convic-

tions (at least not coupled with the influence). Neither did they adhere to their confession of faith. One of the later commissioners made a different book of religious instruction for their youth, namely F. Gorter. *The name commissioner itself breathes of the spirit of the time. No elders or overseers anymore!*

From the church records of Almelo and Blockzyl we see that the denomination which did not belong to the Gröningen and old Flemish shared with them in their changes; especially in the area of intermarriage and military service. The Pfalzer and Swiss surely held the longest to the convictions and way of life of their forefathers, as is known to many of my readers from the Province Gröningen and as is apparent from this account. *We will come back to these Pfalzer and Swiss again later.* With the above my translation from the Dutch by Claugool has come to a conclusion. I only mention that the account continues to report of advances in the education of the ministers, and liberality in socializing with those of different views, etc., and will let only one more sentence by the author follow: "Now all the different denominational names of the churches had to go, but it was only a discontinuing of the names for the spirit had become ecumenical."

Relative to the uniting with such liberal convictions and life style of the descendants of our martyr brethren one is reminded with painful concern of the uneasiness expressed in the preceding article: What would our fathers say to this? Involuntarily the strong rebuke of the Lord through the prophet Ezekiel to his covenant people the children of Israel comes to my mind: "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters," etc. (Ezek. 16:49). The rest of this verse about strengthening the hand of the poor and needy would be less applicable, for history indicates that the Dutch Mennonites rendered commendable services out of their abundant wealth concerning this area.

Where are those men about whom we previously read, who endeavored the longest to hold to the views and convictions of the forefathers of 1740 and who proposed firmer observance of church discipline? What did they do when they saw the dissolution of the same and corruption of prac-

tices and morals pressing in instead? Those longer enduring Pfalzer and Swiss, were they altogether swept into the vortex of distruction by the spirit of the times? If we take into consideration the admonition of our Lord: "By their fruits ye shall know them," and have seen from the writings of the Dutch historian Blaupot (not Claugol) that the many divisions had united and negotiated peace at the sacrifice of some of the truths (the writer calls them convictions) for which the fathers had died, we would be anxious to know where those went and what had become of those who at that time asked; "What would our fathers say to this?" Indeed the many divisions and parties cause us to think that these also are fruits whereby many have proved and have not found that which should be the sign, namely what the Savior says: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." A writer of the opponents of the Anabaptists of that time had written a book giving it the title *The Babel of the Anabaptists*. The divisions certainly were an offense, but: "For it must needs be that offenses come," and, "from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided," etc., the Lord himself has said, and that for the truth's sake. Therefore that group which held to the truth, insofar as they also remained in love was right. For right must remain right and all the godly will embrace it (Psalm 94:15).

Some of those mentioned before, who firmly adhered to the truth, (that is the Pfalzer and Swiss) had already begun to emigrate to North America since 1620. Of their continuing history here, we are informed in the *Mirror of Truth* by John Holdeman and others. What happened with those who remained we have already been told in the historians own words. A Paul, as he wrote to the Philippians about some, would have called them enemies of the cross of Christ, because they did not want to yield in obedience to the prophet who had been foretold; namely our Lord and Savior, "unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut. 18:15; Acts 3, 22, 23) and as he himself told his disciples: ". . . teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20). To all this also the words foretold by Moses and confirmed by the apostles belong, as follows. "And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people (Acts 3:23). And truly this destroying from among the people (ac-

cording to evangelical views) always was not one of the least commands which by many in the church was considered an offence of the cross. If this separation according to apostolic instruction (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:8; Titus 3:10; 2 Tim. 2:12 and 4:15; 2 John 1:10; 2 Thess. 3:6 & 14;) should be or was put into practice it either created trials, if not even divisions or if it was not practiced, the consequences were as the writer remarks: Church discipline (and with it the church itself) fell into a deep slumber. Let us take a couple of examples from the apostolic epistles themselves: "I would they were even cut off which trouble you" (Gal. 5:12). Why then weren't they cut off? Had not the apostle immediately before said or written: ". . . but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be" (Gal. 5:10). They were bewitched to the point where they would not obey the truth. Another example: "And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you" (1 Cor. 5:2). The reason why they failed to be obedient was mentioned. If they had not accepted the apostolic reproof their sentence would have been none other but that which the churches of Asia in Revelation were threatened with. For insofar, as they mentioned cutting off or putting out, was dependent on their obedience and they had not fulfilled the same, they were guilty, so that the apostle could not but write: "Would to God", etc; for he might well make decisions as also concerning the Corinthian church (2 Cor. 13:2) but for the execution of such decisions their obedience was required (2 Cor. 10:6).

Many of the nonresistant Anabaptists in later and up to the present time are no less puffed up than those in the Corinthian church, or bewitched like the Galatians; that they were not obedient to the truth anymore and in church discipline not only totally evaded the cross but had become enemies of the same, and have joined the number about whom Paul has written: "For many walk of whom I have told you often, and now till you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction," etc. (Phil. 3:18-19).

We have seen in the preceding part that the churches in Holland, after they had taken such a liberal course, united, and the denominational names fell away, because the liberal

spirit had already united them. But those who held to the convictions of the forefathers, as it is called did not participate in this union; as has already been mentioned above that the old Flemish in their day also refrained from doing. For to them reference was made by a certain Subert Geritz who wrote to one of his fellow ministers as follows: "Oh, if all those who at this time allow themselves to be called by the worthy name of Jesus Christ and who want to be the most holy, could recognize what the reasons are why they withdraw their fellowship from others; disregarding their baptism and all their religious practices, and do not consider them as a people of God, and besides can see the great errors and varying perceptions that are among themselves and are tolerated; they would consider such peace more than they presently do." This evidently had reference to the churches of the old Flemish. Occasionally they were also called the "hard followers of Menno Simons", who in their time had Claes Ganlof, whom we have learned to know through the *Botshcafter der Wahrheit,* as their bishop. Every unprejudiced reader may, in the current writings of the *Botschafter* compare his way of thinking with the word of God. Besides notice may be taken according to the testimony of a certain Zessilinls, that during sáles and settling of estates, books by Menno Simons and Dietrich Philips were often found.

Under retention of the above title I shall by the grace of God continue to write something for the *Botschafter,* which, although it will take on a somewhat historical flavor, yet may stimulate meditation and at the same time be instructive. The historical (insofar as some of it according to my knowledge has never appeared in print) may provide the provocation for the desire to learn something new. The satisfaction of this desire will not be sinful if one reads with the attitude of the apostle: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). Before I begin with the historical part, I refer back once more to make more complete what has been written before. Mention was made of the being destroyed from among the people (Acts 3:23). One or another may have felt cause to reflect, that if this should only be applied to the disobedient among the people of God, (that is the church of God) if then it would not limit the prophesy concerning Christ too much. We must say thus: If the prophesy: ". . . it shall come to pass," namely the being

destroyed, or cut off, (Gal. 5:12) according to evangelical opinion, as stated above, only of her, that is, only fulfilled by the church of God, it must also only relate to her. The popish, Roman Church interpreted this destroying or cutting off after a carnal fashion, and of course in their opinion according to the Scriptures. among others they also referred to the scriptural passage in Rom. 6:6: ". . . that the body of sin might be destroyed" to cutting off with physical death. Our fathers, the martyr brethren, who in their eyes were considered to be heretics, have fully experienced this. The Church of Jesus Christ, the Church of the living God, which is a pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15) that is, which maintains the truth, to whom it also belongs to observe all things, or in other words to obey all things, which the Lord has commanded; as also the carrying of the cross of Christ belongs only to her, she holds such judgment in a manner becoming to the gospel, according to the instructions of the apostles, as mentioned above. In reference to the opinion, that this belief restricts the prophecy all too much and does not and is not inclusive enough of Christianity in general, is not our responsibility; for we cannot understand it according to Romanish interpretation. We are in spite of that in much concern and uneasiness about the matter. For if it is the case that judgment must begin at the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17), be it that the believers must endure much for the sake of the truth, yea even suffer and die for it, or that judgment is practiced in the house of God unto the Lord and they really honor the truth according to the above mentioned view, and therefore are hated like the Lord has said: ". . . and ye shall be hated of all nations" (Matt. 24:9). If this, we say with the apostle must happen to us first, what kind of an end will it take with those who do not (shall we say not at all) believe the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? (1 Pet. 4:17, 18). Therefore, we say further, we should pay attention to the Word which we hear, that we do not go hence. (Go where?) "For if the Word spoken by angels was steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward: How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation: which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and confirmed unto us by them that heard him: God also bearing them witness (namely to this

salvation) both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?" (Hebrews 2:1-4).

If that which was just mentioned is being denied by many confessors of the name of Jesus, even of conscientious objectors and Anabaptists at the present time; as if God doesn't yet bear witness to this salvation accepted by faith with different miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost through the Spirit of prophesy; so the denial of this truth on the part of some of our opponents (as recently in a certain sense a prominent and popular author did in a quarterly paper) makes us so much more settled in our experiences, that this testimony of Jesus is not only the Spirit of prophecy, (Rev. 19:10) but also, "that the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant" (Psalm 25:14). Although as in its time a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks (1 Cor. 1:23) so this wisdom of the just (Luke 1:17) is today in the eyes of some of our critics considered as foolishness, but nevertheless continues at the present among the people of the Lord in the knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins (Luke 1:77). Therefore, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Read Eph. 1:3-15.

By means of the grace of God we also qualify to claim these truths. Although the accuser of the brethren at the present time finds no less occasion concerning the children of God than he did previously; for in the vineyard of the Lord there is much work, and the accusation, that matters in the church do not function smoothly, without spot or blemish, (Eph. 5) is all too often justified. Even among us some who have newly come to the faith have evidently had some disillusioning experiences, and have found the field of labor or the pilgrimage less comfortable than expected; so that they have repeated the complaining of the children of Israel in the wilderness. For our journey through the wilderness of this world to the heavenly Canaan resembles their journey to the land promised to them. For our warning relative to this we may read 1 Cor. 10:1-14. What happens in our heavenly Father's vineyard the Lord's parable in John 15 teaches us, in which he is the vine and the believers are the branches. And so they are not only the branches, but according to another

parable (Matt. 20) also the laborers in the vineyard and for what the laborers are employed we can in part see from the above) for the pruning and cutting off of the fruitless and useless branches, but then also for the ingathering of the fruits, etc. we here are our heavenly Father's, the actual husbandman's, helpers. Let us also compare 1 Cor. 3:9. Then we dare not be of those who stand idly outside. For after we are inside, we should not stand idle as we did outside, but as a familiar poet sings: "Standing firmly united with our Head we are not allowed to idly stand."

The great goodness of our heavenly Father, this husbandman or householder, who is so kind in rewarding the faithful laborers, including the ones hired late, should inspire many standing idly outside, to come in and to work.

The spirit who was called an accuser of the brethren seems to cause suspicion toward the work of the Lord among his believers in such a way, that he or the various forms of these spirits, seek to portray the errors, transgressions and mistakes that occur in the Church of God in such a dark light as if it was all alike, and God did not have a united people anymore. And as among the disciples in Christ's time there was one Judas; likewise have there been accusers at all times, not only outside of the church but also traitors and slanderers on the inside. But only then, when they were recognized and still continually tolerated, does the church fall under divine judgment, that through them heresies arise and those who are approved may be made manifest, and the purpose of such godly judgment for the Church in general and the members in particular is that they shall not be condemned with the world. Therefore the Lord chastens them. May we compare 1 Cor. 11:31, 32 also Rev. 2:22. It is not that the situation of heresies must absolutely come about like some would want to understand the apostle Paul according to 1 Cor. 11:19. No, but because it went like it was partly pointed out above, it had to come that way.

In Menno's time also and soon after his death there were spirits that were very active to thwart the work of the reformation, and proverbially speaking,—that they are all of the same stamp. For example: The testimony of a certain Allenson was and still is used today for this purpose. According to him Menno is supposed to have had baptism in common with the Munsterites; that much more, we should, they say,

acknowledge all adult baptisms (no mention of converted), not taking into consideration, how on the other hand the slanderous accusation that the Mennonites descended from the Munsterites and even had things in common, either were firmly denied or quietly borne, with the conviction that it was a falsehood. For the righteous have never believed these false testimonies. How could Menno have written as he did if it were true? For example where he writes: that he would neither eat nor drink with them nor in any other matter (notice) have fellowship with them. *Complete Works Part 1 Page 277* And in the edition from Prussia from which I took this extract: *Foundation Part 3, Page 117, 118* And why were such slanderous accusations constantly so firmly denied if Allenson's testimony, believed by some was founded on truth? In such a manner they wanted to favor adult baptism though administered on division even to those unconverted, not considering that in such a manner they were in conflict with themselves, not seeing that they were setting up unconverted baptism as a holy act; though taken fundamentally there was nothing to it. For being an adult and being born of the spirit are two vastly different things. However already in Ganlofs and Brixius times (both elders of the Old Flemish around the year 1600) similar arguments were used against them to influence them against the view of one only united church and baptism. Brixius said in this situation: "We stand only and alone on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, whereof Christ is the cornerstone," and Peter von Ceulen's reply was that their conviction was not based on the historians nor on Menno but was dependent on the Word of God alone. Not as if they were not in agreement with Menno, but that they referred to or stood alone on the Word of God and gave to understand therewith that they were not building on men's opinions Compare Jeremiah 17:5-7.

That Claes Ganlofs, as is evident from his writings was no less than D. Phillips also in agreement with Menno, and defended the same principles after all agrees to the referred-to testimony of Hesselink, of the presence of Menno's and Phillips' writings in the homes of the Old Flemish, of whom he was an elder. But only later because of the many divisions beginning already in Menno's time did the question of baptism receive attention, in which Claes Ganlofs, Brixius and also Peter von Ceulen became involved. The latter gives

evidence from a record made at Emden, that the Friesian, Waterlandian and High Germans were accepted by the Old Flemish through baptism. Some one else by the name of Reus says: "That the Gröningen as well as the Danziger, and still more the Old Flemish would accept no member from another Anabaptist party without administering baptism to them." *According to Blaupoot's History of the Anabaptists at Gröningen, page 124.* It is in place here concerning this to also mention a testimony of their opponents. It is generally right that we consider this misuse (referring to baptism) in the light of their own mode of thinking. They did not only want to restore the purity of the early Christian church in their midst, and did not consider the Anabaptist fellowship in general but the division or group, to which they in particular belonged, as the pure church. One had to indeed receive baptism; but one did not receive it in any other way except by admission into this pure church fellowship. If one had been baptized as an adult at an earlier date, yet one had not received baptism on the true faith. Claes Ganlofs holds to the opinion that baptism in general, including the older ones, does not make the baptized ones into brothers and sisters in the Lord, for then it would be a sad situation to be divided into so many parties and that they had no closer brotherhood but only the sharing of membership in the same church.

Therefore baptism by the united church of God only, makes the members brothers and sisters in the Lord.—So far the testimony. *Buyser 1. a. vl. 366 from Blaupot.* Such we would call: doing justice to one's opponents even though one does not agree with him. If we have seen, that in the matter concerning baptism the Danziger are also mentioned, the readers may be reminded, that D. Philips a contemporary and coworker of Menno's, whom the latter calls his dear brother, was an elder at Danzig; where the Old Flemish later had elders known by the names of George Hansen and Hans von Steen as leaders. But because Flemish and Old Flemish seem to have been two denominations or parties, and as also Hansen's writings indicate that he was not totally with Ganlofs, as well as in certain respects not in agreement with Menno, it may have also been that they weren't one. (Hansen lived close to one hundred years later than Ganlofs.) According to a testimony by Hans von Steen from

one of his letters there were in his day also Waterlandians, also called Friesian, resident in and around Danzig. A large part of these in such a divided condition, emigrated to South Russia toward the end of the eighteenth century.

How that the Old Flemish of those times put up with the situation as it was and in how far they still held to the convictions of their forefathers we shall partly see from following accounts, whereby we will also come in contact with the beginning and continuance of the so called Kleinegemeinde. It shall however first be mentioned, that insofar this happens it shall from my side happen from the standpoint of doing them justice, which justice we also desire for ourselves. We have seen from preceding accounts that in the congregations of the Old Flemish the writings of Menno Simons and D. Philips were represented from which we rightly conclude that they were instructed in and cherished the doctrinal teachings purified by Menno, as is also evident from various agreeing accounts as was shown from the writings of Ganlofs and others. And if we have seen a writing about Menno Simons, that many Mennonites were at least honoring his memory, by distribution and ownership of his writings, we would nevertheless err if we would conclude that this was generally the case among the Mennonites in Europe; only very few copies of Menno Simon's writing were taken along to Russia. To the few who were acquainted with them, belonged the following two men: Klass Reimer and Abram Friesen. The former according to his autobiography was called to the ministry when still in Prussia and had already had scruples concerning the great decay in the church at that time. It was he who left the old church around the year 1812-1813 and therewith founded the so called Kleine Gemeinde, to which organization Abram Friesen, who joined later as deacon, contributed much. We are indebted to them both for many written accounts about the conditions among the Mennonites of that time in Prussia and Russia, particularly concerning their attitudes toward Menno's writings and their views about them. Some of our readers (outside of our Church) might in their pre-judgments against the necessity, of going out of a decayed church, experience unexpected surprises, and then not wonder at those who went out if they did this in the sense of the Scripture, 2 Cor. 6:17 and Rev. 18:4 for the salvation of their souls, if they would hear part

of this history. Partly to obviate the above mentioned prejudices, and for other reasons it would seem to be the right place as well as a suitable time to write something about it, in connection with which I however shall let them speak, that is, to reproduce what they have written. Klass Reimer writes among other as follows:

"When I wanted to move from Prussia I was at times filled with anguish and fear because at Danzig it was such a bewildered Babel. Because I had to leave it brought many deep impressions. When I had to leave the church here, it also was hard for me. Sodomitic sinfulness and pride drove me out of Prussia (also because my father-in-law, Bishop Peter Epp often said on his sick bed: "Children, you must leave for Russia because here the Mennonites have lost out." Oh, I thought to myself, maybe God will establish his little band in Russia. But alas! When I came here I found it totally bewildered, and a dreadfully angry bishop. This bishop not only made dreadful expressions, but according to Reimer's account he caused a man by the name of Wiens, who slipped out of his hands, to be brought back carried by four persons (as is understood before the audience) with the order to bring him regardless of consequences. The result was that the man had to be bedfast. He refused to pay attention to remonstrations concerning the matter: but we often talked to Ens about it, whereat he sometimes became angry and said, if it should happen again, that if four men could not bring him then eight men should carry him. Because the before mentioned Wiens now was expelled from the church, others wanted to have those who had done violence to Wiens at Ens' command also disciplined, and a great quarrel ensued. Wiens was a respected person, a sort of people's representative and was, for example, often employed in case of boundary disputes between Germans and Doukhobors; likewise in other missions to the government, and under such circumstances a large part of the church did not avoid him as excommunication requires. On an occasion Wiens once also came to church. When we were in the minister's room and Ens became aware that Wiens was there also, he became terribly angry and said to us all: Men, do not allow that man in church, or I will grab what I can, be it axe or spade and immediately strike him. In his rage he grabbed a cap from the table and hurled it to the floor with all his might, and set

guards at the door."

Let this suffice as to the account of the terrible rage of this bishop.

Concerning the writings of Menno Simons (which owing to Reimer and A. Friesen efforts, through arragements by the latter's brother were delivered for printing in Prussia,) Reimer writes as follows: "About which the elders and ministers are very indignant, that they have already wanted to destroy them, . . . which are lying in hiding places, but still have been in a wonderful way reprinted and brought to the light, about which many of the nonresistant Christians are indignant. The story about having the writings of Menno Simons printed in Prussia, and the confiscation of the same, God willing, shall presently follow.

With regard to the before mentioned printing of Menno Simons writings in Prussia, an extract from the writing of the brother of the already mentioned A. Friesen to him follows: "I have had a sore trial regarding the books by Menno Simons, about which I and my wife have been much concerned, and still are, whether I have done the right thing, in having delivered up the books so willingly. Whether that will be the Lord's will, or if I should have allowed it to come to a severe test, as I was threatened, in case of not giving them up. Then the threats would have not been only against me, but the printer of this work would have been in a bad situation. We considered this, and my resolve was that I have delivered them up in September, except the third part, which belongs to the two parts which have already come to Russia, I will keep with me and wish that the others may be taken away the sooner the better."

"There have already been four large meetings, and I was also called to attend the beginning of the second one, but it did not stay with this but I was requested to present a written explanation (which follows later). I consented, in writing, to deliver them up, which was not enough but I was summoned once more to a meeting in Orloff. I do not know why. I think that some had a desire to become personally acquainted with me. Now, after all this we concluded that we should investigate about censorship, which seemed a difficult matter for my nature, but we put it to ourselves vividly, that the loving God, who has the hearts of men in his hands and can

lead them as he will; in that we believed that this was all God's work and we the humble instruments, which we also experienced to our strengthening. When the printer came to the censor with the old book the censor firstly asked whether the cost would not be too high for us. And when after the decision to print he came to him the second time, he again asked who would do the correcting. Then the printer said that he had undertaken to do it. "Now, said the censor, then you must not change anything in it, so that the worthy work loses none of its value. When the proofreading of the first part was finished, I went to Bishop Regier with the corrected book but did not find him at home. But I left the book there with the opinion that thereby the attitude of the Mennonite ministry might become mellower. 'For, they say, if the books are generally read among the Mennonites they will come into the hands of people of other religious faiths, who would as a result become antagonistic to the Mennonites.' I replied that care should be taken that the Mennonites did not conform so fully to others in luxury and pride as well as in their life and conduct. This would be more beneficial, also allowing the books to be read in order to comply with their teaching. My humble admonition at this time was unacceptable. However there are many who would gladly have the books, but as yet no one is willing to openly stand and freely acknowledge it before the Lord. Indeed all in the large assembly said the books were very good if read by favorably minded people, nevertheless the sentiment prevailed that many are light-minded, who might make the wrong use of them. Therefore rather not put them in circulation."

"Now follows the writing of the ministers and then my reply."

"The undersigned are assembled today to hold consultations regarding the books forwarded for printing by P. von Riesen and find themselves compelled to inform him as follows: Firstly, P. von Riesen is herewith instructed, that he make himself responsible for life by undersigning a statement with his own hand, to recall all books already printed and deliver them to a place to be appointed. Because it is evident, that some of the included passages may serve to the disadvantage of the churches collectively, in respect to the love for neighbors of other religious faiths, although the complete works of Menno Simons cannot lose their value thereby.

Secondly: That the printing of the edition now in process be totally discontinued. In case of refusal the undersigned (although unwillingly) will however find themselves induced to inform higher government authorities concerning the matter, and the same, (P. von Riesen) would have only himself to blame for any unpleasant consequences resulting from these actions. We are expecting an explanation concerning the matter during the course of this month in order to employ further measures. Given at Marienburg, the 10th of August 1835. This is signed by 29 elders and ministers."

"My answer now follows: 'From a writing received by me, which was undersigned by several bishops, many ministers and several leaders, I perceive that the Fundamental Book by Menno Simons which I had printed largely for the churches in Russia, has caused offense and consequently they desire that the total printed writings be recalled and delivered to a designated place. Concerning the recalling of the printed books I have already taken care of, except several copies, which I believe are in good hands, whereof a record is herewith included. Secondly, concerning the printing, it has been completed and even if I should get orders from Russia without informing some elders of local congregations no more orders for printing shall be made. And in reference to the former, namely the delivering up of the printed Menno Simon's Books, I make myself responsible for those that have not been sent to Russia, except for several copies which I wish to keep for myself and my children, to give them into the hands of the honorable Bishop Mr. Peter Regier of Tiegenhagen for safe keeping in the coming month of September, Schiedlitz, the 24th of August 1835.

'Peter von Riesen.'

'Yet I need to include a hearty request with this writing of mine, to the undersigned dear elders, ministers and bodies of many congregations.' "

My wish is "That each of you might have a copy of the writings of Menno Simons, given for safe keeping, bound into a book and then with deep meditation read through the worthy foundation book by our predecessor Menno Simons once or twice. Then I am convinced, if otherwise you honestly want to seek and promote the spiritual well being of your churches you will find the writings taken into custody very beneficial, and gladly allow them to become available

to God-seeking souls. For I and my wife know what comfort can be derived from these writings by one who is seeking the right way, and what blessings we received from them. Yes, even the printer of this work honestly admits, though he is not of our religion, that this book had been very profitable to him, for example concerning the Lord's supper and also in many other matters." So far from Peter von Riesen.

An excerpt from a reply by A. Friesen to the above now follows:

"But it appears really sad and pathetic that twenty-nine elders and ministers have agreed not to let the books by Menno Simons come to the light. One would like to ask these men: How come, do you want to put the lighted lamp under a bushel? Oh, that they might take the words of Christ in Matthew 5:13, 14, 15 to heart! They would have to call out woe upon woe for having done so foolishly. For what do these good men think of this? Menno feared neither tyranny nor persecution, neither pressure nor disfavor, hatred nor poverty, but in this book has freely professed before all men his ground and faith, and confessed the Lord Jesus Christ before men according to Matthew 10:31-39. But without imminent threat of danger these good elders and teachers are afraid without reason, for the hearts of the higher authorities are favorably inclined concerning freedom of conscience and worship and rule over the pious with great gentleness. Not only do they refrain from interfering in their faith and principles but often refer us back to them. As I saw according to your writing even the proofreader was concerned that the book might not lose any of its value. On the contrary, the elders and teachers, who should be more in favor of this work consider it a great risk, and fear hatred from people of other religious persuasions. I only fear that a different matter in their own conscience aroused hatred in themselves because Menno Simons' teaching severely reproves the Mennonites of the present and especially the ministry. Consequently they feel ashamed and reproved and therefore prefer not to have these books in their congregations. In our district the bishop Jacob Warkentin expressed his disapproval concerning these books at Klass Reimer of Petershagen in the presence of four bishops. He received no response to his statement that he had not yet seen the books and would take care not to do so in the future. But finally he also mentioned the

same risk that had been mentioned before in Prussia. Thereupon a bishop by the name of Wilhelm Lange wisely replied and said when he was still living in Prussia not far from Berlin a Privy Councillor from the king's court had invited him to come for a visit; who had said to him: A Menno Simons book had come into his possession which he had read with wonderment, not having believed that Menno Simons had published such good teaching, and that Lange should acquaint his congregation with this book for he thought that many Mennonites did not know about his teaching anymore. This in part reproved Elder Warkentin's excuse so that he said no more. Yet since the time when the writing from the honorable bishop Abram Regier became known among us and Elder Warkentin expressed his opinion about it, few or none of the books have been sold. For the complaints of such men make them worthless in the people's eyes.

From your writing, dear brother, I see that you and your wife are concerned whether you did the right thing to give up the books so voluntarily. I think you should be at ease about it for we cannot know what the Lord wants to do through this. Possibly in this manner a stirring may result among the people and through this it may be revealed how the ministers have departed from the true faith and the salt of the earth has lost its savour. The true doctrine can be compared to a leaven which a woman takes and mixes into three measures of flour till it is all leavened according to Matthew 13:33. And so Menno Simon's teaching may become fruitful in spite of having been confiscated. My heart's desire is that God would grant that the dear bishop Peter Regier would be kindled together with all those who would be included in the three measures of flour, or who belong to the kingdom of Heaven. For I regret that the dear elders and ministers in Prussia together with their congregations (there may be innocent ones among them) have entirely lost their nonresistant Christianity. Having already become so timid that they fear to let the teaching of Menno Simons, who defended the ground of the nonresistant Christians clearly and plainly in the power of the Word of God, come to the light; how would they themselves stand if called upon to defend it! But their resistance against Menno Simon's writings clearly indicate that they are overcome in this area.

A prominent civil servant wished that the Mennonites

would publish the foundational teachings of Menno Simons more; however their overseers and ministers recall them and confine them as if some abomination was contained in them.

As if they only want to continue with the new teaching; so that one could with right say and lament with the prophet: 'O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths' (Isaiah 3:12)."

After the informant of the reported conditions in the preceding issue, in an explanation in a different place reports concerning the decay of the congregations in Russia and that the efforts of K. R. and others against this decay were in vain, he continues as follows: However these bishops and ministers could be persuaded no further except to acknowledge that according to Holy Scripture K. R. was right; nevertheless insisted that he desist from his intentions and give them up; and if he refused as far as they were concerned he could be sent to Siberia. Behold, dear reader, since that time, which happened in 1812 or '13, spiritual and scriptural discipline has almost ceased; but to the contrary corporal and civil punishment was introduced among the Mennonites of the Molotschna and turned over to civil government. This was the first and most important reason why our separation took place, and which was of greatest urgency if nonresistant Christianity was to be preserved. It is evident since the time spiritual discipline was noticeably more and more neglected evil and godless living such as drinking, fighting, lying, cheating and such like took the upper hand. Oh, my dear reader, you cannot with tears, lament enough that it has come to the point that not even thieves and drunkards are being banned. On the contrary drunkenness is accepted as an excuse when as a result other crimes and vices are committed, even though drunkenness in itself is a death sin and worthy of excommunication. Tell me, beloved reader, what is left for us to do that we do not become partakers of their sins? Oh, consider rightly what Paul writes to the Corinthians and you will be unable to have a free conscience toward God and go to the communion table with those living in the evident works of the flesh; but will have to admit that there was nothing left for us but to separate ourselves from all our sins.

Therefore know, beloved reader, that not we but they are responsible for our secession who allow all such godless and

carnal living among themselves, and thereby caused so much confusion and offendedness contrary to the doctrine which Paul expressly says: "Avoid them," and adds to this, "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly: and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." From this, my dear reader, you can readily see that our secession did not happen aimlessly or groundlessly, or because of party spirit as we have been accused; but we have abundant reason and also firm grounds according to Holy Scripture, and above this we have the beautiful promise from the Lord when he speaks as follows: "Therefore thus saith the Lord, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them. And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 15:19, 20).

So far out of A. Friesen's explanations for the reasons of the secession.

Further along in the same explanation it says concerning excommunication:

Nevertheless some of their bishops and ministers were so presumptuous that they were not content with their own misery but involved themselves in our separation. They consoled our expelled ones not to take it too seriously, accepted them into their fellowship as though they were unjustly disciplined, promised them liberty, though they were as the apostle says, ". . . themselves servants of corruption: . . ." (2 Peter 2:16-19). And not regarding that ". . . the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness:" (Romans 1:18).

Many among them rejoice already, that our separation also in some cases does not bear much fruit; however, not we but our opponents are to blame, for some of them make it their business whenever they have opportunity to tell our disciplined members that they have been innocently disciplined. Oh, how it saddens us when we reflect on such behavior. Yet we have no other reference to give except the

words of the apostle: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:17).

The following is reported about their relation to the fellowship and celebrations from which they went out: It is offensive to many that we seldom attend their weddings, and caution our members against it: especially when someone leaves the church and to get married joins another and in such circumstances we do not consent to our members attending the engagement and wedding celebrations. Judge for yourself, dear reader, whether we should do differently than we have till now.

You see for yourself how these poor blinded people come to such a wedding ceremony; one proud and the next one still more proud, the tobacco pipe in the hand and the song book under the arm as if thereby the all-wise God and the suffering and dying Lord Jesus is being honored and served. Paul says: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of the Lord Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Cor. 4:10). Then when the luxuriously dressed wedding guests have gathered, the marriage ceremony or at funerals the service is ended, tobacco smoking is the first action wherewith they publicly express their carnal attitude and by means of which they tread the divine service underfoot.

Just like bishop Peter Peters in his booklet, "The Way to the City of Peace," expresses himself on page 138 and calls tobacco smoking an offering to Bacchus. And in this offering the minister takes part by means of which the light minded ones are not reproved but rather strengthened in their service of Bacchus. Yet many a well-meaning and God-loving person is much offended and saddened thereby. The usual endeavor whereof the Wisdom of Solomon speaks now follows the wedding feast. "Come, let us indulge while it is available and use our body while it is young. We want to fill up on the best wines and ointments; let us not neglect the May flowers . . . ", of which you can read more in the second chapter of the Wisdom of Solomon. Unchaste joking, laughing and teasing of both sexes, boisterous singing and drinking begins—also in some places possibly music and dancing takes place—so that you can no more call it a Christlike, godly life but much more a godless life with

heathen practices; so that we have reason as much as possible to withdraw ourselves and our young people, and we with Peter can truthfully say: "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:" See, dear reader, this alienates our opponents; that we run not with them to the same excess of riot . . ."(1 Peter 4:3 & 4). We do not consider our secession our own doing but that it is the grace of God and a sacred calling. Yea, we believe, that great grace and mercy befalls man; so much the greater and severer will also his sin be if he purposely withdraws from this grace and for any price casts it from himself. This becomes clearly evident when it says: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have know the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. One also reads such in Hebrews chapters 6 & 10.

Because Holy Scripture so fearfully threatens the backsliders may we not support them in their misfortune or give occasion to this in permitting our members to attend the previously mentioned weddings; thereby making the way to apostasy easier. On the contrary, we want to declare how it grieves us when members sever themselves to their greatest ruin from the church which nevertheless is the body of Christ. For Solomon declares: "The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead" (Proverbs 21:16).

See, my good reader, we consider ourselves more responsible to be at home and feel sorry for such souls rather than of attending such weddings according to their desire; or even should look on or listen to their heathenish, wild behavior which, to welcome such unhappy souls to their celebrations, is usually practiced quite freely and openly. As Solomon says: "They have neither pure way of life nor marriage" (Wisdom 14:23). Oh no, beloved reader, no! We rather take heed to the Lord's command when He ways: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord and touch not the unclean thing," (2 Cor. 6:17, 1 Peter

4:14), although we are hated and slandered because of it.

Because of various and mentioned reasons they also withdrew themselves from funeral sermons and public graveside prayers. The latter because of the understandable reason that a prayer for the dead was too late. The former because the funeral sermon or dismissal as it was and still is called was mostly directed at the deceased one as a dismissal and frequently was what one writter termed it "a preaching of lies;" because such unrepentant deceased ones against whom the Word of God pronounced the death sentence were praised as saved. Suicides were (and still are) the only exceptions for whom no funeral sermon or dismissal was preached. This is an indication that the message was not directed to the living bereaved family in this case but only to the departed one. The "Kleine Gemeinde" has in more recent times realized this difference and at their funerals sermons are not totally excluded.

By the above explanations one readily discerns the grave concern of the mentioned persons; and one cannot bar the thoughts that it wouldn't have taken much to take a further step which could have led to a more thorough reformation; it is hard to say why this did not happen; at least I shall refrain from expressing my opinion about it. The question arises, "But what should these men have done, or what better thing could they have done?" My reply simply stated; "I do not know," would be less of a solution than if at least I express my thoughts. These do not refer to establishing of a new church through exchange or self baptism; rather my thoughts go to the example of the Thessalonian Brethren whereof the *Martyrs Mirror* and other historical writings inform us. This would not have stood in the way nor precluded Christ's words of promise according to Matthew 16:18. The impulsion to go deeper was not lacking in these men for concerning the avoidance of a certain unfaithful member who was accepted by the "old church". K. R. writes about A. Friesen's convictions as follows: "Hereupon my fellow-laborer A. Friesen expressed himself that we would avoid him as long as he lives," (or till he repents was probably how he meant it). The former, however, thought that his fellow laborer interpreted the Scripture too literally on this point.

However, later they allowed apostates, if they handed in a

written cancellation of their membership before they were expelled, to go their own way; that is to take the way which above was described as such a scripturally hazardous one. This matter of giving the church a written renunciation, in order to join the mother church or another; or what some prefer even more to refrain from joining any church, so that unrestricted liberties may be enjoyed, had evidently, though not in reality, (although to the great disadvantage of church discipline) systematically gained the foreground and become the preferred method; so that the latter soon became a rare happening. An attractive liberty this, for many a lustful or also discipline-avoiding and cross-fleeing child of God in the church of Jesus Christ!

The lack of understanding of a united church inevitably resulted in the mentioned relationship to and other consequent dependence on those from whom they had gone out.

This mentioned understanding on the basis of Christ's will expressed in his high priestly prayer (John 17:21) might rightly serve as the key not only to come to the way of wisdom mentioned above by the dear writer, but as converted, "to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17), also abide therein. If one has become a part of the church of Jesus Christ as a member and (not outside) received baptism, therefore cannot without further ado, that is, without becoming subject to discipline, go back, or to avoid discipline and have more unrestricted freedom have the liberty to go from one party to another.

And whereas they also held to a common baptism with those from whom they had separated, regardless if baptized without conversion; and those bishops (as the baptizers) were themselves of the same kind and unconverted, as pointed out and admitted; the result could hardly be any other but that it later remained unquestioned, whether those who from other churches joined the "Kleine Gemeinde" were converted before baptism or not. The shallow procedure may rightly be ascribed to the circumstance that they themselves also were converted only after being baptized. Although, likewise in this respect, A. Friesen was not spared the urge (in reference to himself as well as accepting members who were baptized unconverted) to a more thorough reformation.

Here also we shall reproduce his own words. First in reference to himself he writes as follows: "I often feel uneasy when I think of our condition and how we will stand at that day when we will be told: 'Give an account of your stewardship.' I do not mean, beloved friends, only you herewith, but I feel uneasy about myself; however I do not despair that I cannot honor, fear and serve the Lord fervently enough; 'for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.' It also now comes to my mind when Paul came to Ephesus he found some disciples there, to whom he said: 'Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.' When they heard from Paul that they should believe on Jesus, 'they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them!'

When I reflect on this I hardly know what to do with myself. I have not been baptized unto John's baptism, for then I could follow the example of the disciples at Ephesus. But I alleged that I believed on Christ and thereon was baptized; however I cannot console myself that I received the Holy Spirit for my life was far too wicked; so that the Spirit, who teaches rightly, had to depart from me. O beloved friends! I often think in my heart: if the elders and ministers as also the church had not believed my mouth confession at that time until I had renounced the world with all her ways they would have furthered their own as well as my soul's salvation. My behavior was not hidden from the people; I dressed according to the fashions just like the people of the world and which before God is an abomination. I smoked tobacco that the smoke sometimes ascended out of my nose and mouth, which resembles someone who is damned (the smoke of whose torment will ascend as the apostle John says) rather than a repentant sinner. I was in with social gatherings where nothing but singing, laughing, playing, and idle sinful conversation was carried on. And yet I could become a member of the church, supposedly also called the Lord's church.

O beloved! Isn't it a great pity if someone is in such a condition? Sometimes it caused my eyes to overflow with tears.

O! that it could have happened with such repentance as is written of Peter.

And if one joins the church in such a light-minded manner, altogether uncircumcised in heart and mind, it is readily conceivable how Satan portrays all sin as very trifling to such a person, as long as it does not become too grievous before the world."

So much in reference to himself in regards to baptism. Further he describes how through much reading he found comfort in his soul, and by a remarkable dream experienced great joy, and thereby was inspired to work out his salvation with fear and trembling. Space however is here too limited for the rest.

To the other, concerning the reception of unconverted baptized ones, he writes in reply to a written inquiry brought to him by the Colony-Administration, in regards to a Lutheran youth baptized by a bishop named Schmitt, (partly with quotations from the Confession of Faith of the Martyr Brethren) as follows: "Since, then, Christian baptism is of such a nature that it was ordained and commanded by Christ only upon faith, repentance, and reformation, and was practiced and taught by His high apostles in this, and in no other wise; therefore we herewith rightly (mark well) reject, not only the baptism of unintelligent, speechless infants but also of all unrepentant, proud, carnally minded adults who do not believe the Word.

If then this repeatedly mentioned Colony youth has received baptism in the above mentioned manner, he is already in the church of Christ, being an epistle of Christ, known and read of all men. But if he has been baptized without faith, repentance and a new born life; he is void of all Christian virtues as an empty letter. And he who baptized him, has dealt no more wisely, than one who seals an empty letter and mails it to his Lord, whom he should respect and honor. What kind of praise such a one would receive is readily conceivable. That the above does not exclusively refer to the Lutheran youth baptized in infancy, becomes evident from the fact, that the baptizer as well as the youth, if the latter was baptized without conversion, faith, repentance and new born life, is being mentioned. Besides it is to be taken for granted that this youth will have, before baptism,

received the same instruction as other applicants. We can easily imagine how the writer must have felt, under these circumstances, while writing the above. How the example of the empty, sealed envelope must have painfully reminded him of his own experience. But to take further steps in breaking off with the baptism of the unconverted, it seems to me his conscience was bound, because he alleged that he believed in Christ, for, says he: "I have not been baptized unto John's baptism else I could do as they did," . . . namely the disciples at Ephesus.

And so they believed in part and settled therein in that among others they also referred to Ambertus, as a later writer said: "Because baptism is only a sign of obedience, someone, who with Simon the sorcerer and others who have obtained baptism in a hypocritical manner, upon right teaching, may renew this obedience with the baptism of tears. As Peter instructs the sorcerer and Ambertus and those who have fallen into new sins after having received baptism[1] Acts 8:22). *Marytr's Mirror Part 1 page 181.*

With the above consolation one should not neglect to consider that something which is to be renewed (so also obedience) must already have been there; otherwise the letter has been sealed though unwritten and it is no different than Menno says thereof: "For outside of the church of Christ, which is a gathering of the penitent, there is neither baptism nor Holy Supper.

Once more, understand that which I write: "Without penitence, neither water, bread, nor wine, or ceremony, avail in Christ; even if they are administered by the apostles themselves. Before him avail a new creature, converted, changed and broken heart, a sincere fear and love of God, unfeigned love of one's neighbors, a mortified, humble, sober, and peaceful life according to the Word and example of the Lord. Where there is such a new being, there indeed is true baptism and the true Supper. But, once more, to be baptized externally, and to partake of the Supper, merely in the letter and in appearance, not also inwardly before God in Spirit and truth, I repeat, is nothing but to grasp at a shadow, to mimic God's work, yea, to be hypocrites and deceivers."

So far from Menno Simon.

On the other hand the application has been made

(especially in later times) that the renewing of baptism . . . also in the above named circumstances . . . "is laying again the foundation." Concerning this one should be clearly reminded, that that, which is to be repeated or should happen again, of course must have actually happened before. On laying the foundation one may read the essay: "Ye shall be perfect."

To write something about the laying on of hands relates in a certain respect to the course of our consideration. In the "Kleine Gemeinde" the laying on of hands for the purpose of prophecy and receiving of the Holy Spirit according to the meaning of holy Scripture, was unknown (Acts 19:6, 8, 18, 19; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6). But the ordaining or instating (as it was called) of an elder or bishop by another who already held this office was insofar considered an absolute necessity, that therefore even those church elders, were requested to perform this for them, whom they for conscience sake had left and of whom, as to their cleansing from them, had expressed themselves with the following scripture: "Therefore thus saith the Lord, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them" (Jeremiah 15:19). This "separating themselves" from the vile persons happened on the basis of these words of scripture: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; etc. (2 Cor. 6:17). And: "Come out of her, (Babylon) my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). And as it continues in the former writings: "Oh, my reader, consider thoroughly, what the apostle says to Timothy: "If a man therefore purge himself from these (understand, who do not remain in the doctrine of Christ), he shall be a vessel prepared unto honor, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." Therefore it is understood, that on the contrary, whoever again unites with such people becomes defiled and of necessity an unholy vessel, to the dishonor of his master Jesus Christ, totally unfit for use, because he says himself: "No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

That this desire (the instating of a bishop) under the prevailing circumstances was as mentioned, only to maintain a certain order, rather than to receive, through laying on of hands, existing related gifts of prophesy and blessing, is hardly otherwise conceivable. Yet this dependence and request for this service speaks sufficiently, that I will hopefully (also by the readers who are less free of prejudice) be understood, if in this and other respects of that reformation, including the cleansing of doctrinal grounds, I have expressed a lack of thoroughness.

Klass Reimer already shortly after his secession investigated this matter but after unsuccessful efforts, after having among others referred to Waldus and Menno Simons, contented himself with the following thoughts: "We find," says he, "that God honors the election more than the ordination; for we read in Numbers that the Lord God commanded Moses to gather seventy men of the elders of Israel around the tabernacle; then the Lord would come down and take of the spirit that was upon Moses and give to the seventy elders so that they should prophesy. There were another two who were mentioned but had not gathered before the tabernacle as the Lord had commanded; nevertheless he still gave them the spirit in the camp. Then Joshua, Moses servant, said: "My Lord Moses, forbid them." Then Moses said: "Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets!" And therefore the election by lot or ballot is more important than the ordination." This opinion was in similar circumstances also more to my satisfaction; for I also had scruples at the time concerning this lack; yet for myself could not believe otherwise, but that, and especially in reference to this important situation, we would have to acquiesce in it, as the apostle says: "And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better" (Hebrews 7:7), instead of believing that it could be right to request the instating or ordination from those whom they had left having found them to be deceptive laborers and called them servants of corruption as was previously mentioned. And yet repeated requests were made to them for this favor. The latter obvious in "Simple Explanations" which A. F. had had printed.

Only at a later time, when the church in the eighteen sixties found itself sadly divided (only to mention as a warning) into four parts was the requested ordination in the above named sense performed on a nephew of the above mentioned A. Friesen by a bishop of those churches whose overseers at that time qualified for these words: Nevertheless some of their bishops and ministers were so presumptuous that they were not content with their own misery but involved themselves in our separation. They consoled our expelled ones not to take it too seriously; accepted them into their fellowship as though they were unjustly disciplined, promised them liberty, though they were as the apostle says, ". . . themselves servants of corruption: . . ." (2 Peter 2:16-19).

We must take note that the above named divisions did not remain in existence indefinitely, for exactly at the time when the regression by the above named ordination took place two of the divided parts were united with the preliminary exercising of feetwashing of the ministers (as a sign of mutual acceptance) and a third party followed shortly after. Mutual feetwashing after all was in practice since the beginning of the church. I shall refrain from writing about the causes of the above mentioned divisions; they were unworthy enough to approach comparison with the separation of the "Kleine Gemeinde," for I could never consider the latter as wrong or contrary to Scripture. But indeed the continuation and justification of fellowship with those baptized without conversion; likewise to request and receive ordination in contradiction to their secession I could not consider as right. Whatever the questions, causes and apparent grounds of these divisions were, I personally have not instigated or brought any into being; even not then when the question of baptism was stirred up partly because of the form and partly because of baptizing the unconverted. On the contrary I labored and worked against it. Simon the sorcerer with his coming to the faith and baptism; the Corinthians with their lack of knowledge of God, and other Scriptures and examples were used to misinterpret the truth.

My writings of that time are upon occasion still held in respect and applied against me, like in his time Menno's first understanding, of the threefold admonition, before expulsion, in all cases, was used against him. But when I read

Ganlof's writings and especially his booklet of the united, undivided Church of God, my convictions received different direction. (I made mention of this elsewhere in this paper). And if my uniting and that of many with me, to the united Church of God may be called a separation it is the only one I have made; and on my part it was for the sake of the truth which I was not able to resist. Whereof I also hold that the truth or the foundation of one only Church of God is indisputable with scriptural grounds. Indeed also, the privilege we claim before so many others, to be the united Chuch of God is being contested. Not to say much about it, that many readily apply the expression and interpret it as "the only" instead of the way we have it, and truly to the honor and in the way of Christ's thinking: to be united and one (John 17), and according to the Apostle: One Lord, one faith, one baptism (Eph. 4:5): not different faiths and baptisms, but according to one rule into which we have come and are of the same mind (Phil. 3:16), namely the rule of the new creature (Gal. 6:16). When we perceive that of the numerous denominations or divisions many still have their own Shibboleth, that is their password. With one it is for example the going into the water (the fulfillment of all rightousness), with the other the Sabbath and so on. So we shall not go wrong to accept that the Shibboleth of the Church of God was being one with Christ, whereby he will know his own and of the others he will not know whence they are (Luke 13:25-27). May we therefore, dear reader, not be negligent in learning our password according to Luke 13:24, where it says: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate," etc., and Matt. 7:13, 14; that, when we, like those came to the ford of Jordan (Judges 12:6) come to the ford of death may have a free passage and may be known by the Lord, as his own, at his appearing and be welcomed into the haven of supreme happiness.

In reference to the privilege, whereof mention was just made above; the privilege to be the united Church of God, which is contested, yes, envied, it could be likely concluded that those who acknowledge the marriage of Christ as polygamous instead of monogamous, or at least support it (wherein also, as seen above, the "Kleine Gemeinde" makes no exception) therefore already have no right to this preference unless it be according to Isaiah 4:1 in polygamy.

You may also read about this important doctrine "concerning the succession of the Church of God" on page 24 of the *Marty's Mirror*.

But if we approach the matter, and instead of recognizing the many divisions and separations as sin and of evil, and if a church not ony divides as seen above but sevenfold, and presents herself to the Lord according to Isaiah 4:1 in the image of polygamy, in his name; if then, I meant to say, instead of acknowledging this evil this position is justified with them, at their time, existing seven churches in Asia, which does not at all compare; the injury cannot be healed; and instead of working towards unity in the sense of the Lord's high priestly prayer and his godly will according to John 17:21-23 one will only lend support to the confusion, separation and division, if not actually participating in it. Yet one should consider: unity and being one in the sense and according to Christ's will: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, and that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:21-23). Unity in this sense with Christ must, of course, include the obedience proclaimed, enjoined by Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15), commissioned to the apostles by the lips of the Lord (Matthew 28:20), and brought to the remembrance of His own by the Holy Spirit: to teach and observe whatsoever he has commanded. ". . . him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." Well understood! The mentioned unity must include this obedience to the truth in whatsoever he has commanded; likewise love to all men (Matt. 5:44-48).

Now I must once more refer back a little and pick up the former subject. The case with those seven churches was different than with churches separated by division. The number seven has no reference to a division, although they varied; some being closer and others farther away from the Lord. They were only founded by the apostles in seven different places, as in part the Acts and epistles of the apostles point out. These churches were grounded and organized according

to the same rule and the same precept, and to be sure, in accordance with the rules and commands as the apostles had received them from the Lord (2 Cor. 11:2; Ephesians 2:19-22 and 4:3-6). And as such their servants were in the Lord's hand at the time when John had to write to them (Revelation 1:16-20). That means in the Lord's hand in a certain sense: for example, as in the Lord's mouth so also are all people in God's hand (Job 1:10). Then in another sense read Job 37:7.

The distinct sign by which the true children of God are known, mainly consists of what Christ did say: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." By the unity of the children of God, the world shall know the sending of Christ, and thereby believe in the same, which unity Christ called a Glory (John 17). When children of God have fervent love to each other, out of a pure heart, then divisions are not apt to come forth from among them. The words of the apostle Paul, when he says: "there must be also heresies among you," etc., are sometimes being understood and interpreted as if the statement "there *must* be" is absolute and fixed. This assumption, however, does not seem right to me, except if the church through disobedience, like *there* the Corinthians, has brought herself into such a condition. For in regards to heresies in the Church, out of the words by the apostle Jude there comes forth, that he calls them carnal, and as such, having no spirit; i.e. not having the Spirit of Christ. Paul questioned the Corinthians: "If one saith: I am of Paul, the other: I am of Apollos, are ye then not carnal?" And if by the apostle, during that time, it was called carnal, so it is not to be assumed that for the present time, it should be called a work of the Holy Ghost to make so many divisions, and to establish so many groups. The divisions are-not the good fruit by which the believers can be known. Somebody might ask the question: when according to the words of Paul the heretic members have to be expelled and avoided by the Church, then might, if these draw a part of the membership along with them, a division be unavoidable. In such a case it would be advisable to apply the greatest care so that those who are approved of God through the fire of trial would be made manifest, and that they through the same may prove

themselves true to the Word.

According to observations and experience, for a teaching, I want to make the following presentation: for example what a church consists of today, (here I do not mean the Chruch of God) will sooner or later be divided into two or three parts, and each part gives itself or receives its special denomination, depending on which party they have sided with, even like the Corinthians with Paul or with Cephas. They each have their special church and their special way; but of the same rule, like the apostle counselled, nothing to speak of. So it also happens that one part tempts away members from another part, which is not being considered as stealing; but this is being reckoned with as so-called home mission; for at certain occasions these different groups will ignore their differences and will accept *these as well as those* as children of God. With some also the instrumental music and the liberty towards vanity and the lust of the eyes is a special attraction, and a charm to those who come short of the grace of God, in particular thinking for the youth. And without considering their divided condition and partiality these groups at times will confer back and forth, and mutually serve each other with preaching. And it is remarkable how that in this wise the righteous and the impartial, since they take no part in such activities, will be stamped as partial. May the Godfearing reader here ponder this, for that is it which I wanted to herewith touch upon, for shouldn't those former by rights be called partial?

The wisdom that is from above is first pure, namely, free from all defilement of the flesh, as well as of the spirit. It is peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace (James 3). Therefore be peacable, so the God of love and of peace will be with you.

And may you through the grace of God abide in his love; in the love for truth and in obedience towards the same; and in observing all that which Christ has commanded you. Where there is love, there is also obedience, even as Christ was obedient to his Father, to do his will, so are also his disciples. If they are obedient to his Words, they therewith

prove, that they love Him. In other words: when they love Him, they are obedient. He who loves according to the will of God, he it is who burns in love towards Him. He who is thus endowed with passion, cannot be satisfied until he goes out to another; and cannot but love his neighbor as himself, and so, not forgetting any duty, he will be of service to him. And therefore the keeping in the love of God brings it about, that a person also makes his soul pure in obeying the truth through the Spirit, towards genuine brotherly love; and in this sincere love (for brotherly love is fair and does not need a polish) out of a pure heart a person then also loves the brethren; neither does he let them go just like that, in a case if they fail or become carnal, but a person will reprove sin, and will forgive, when he amends himself. In another place of the *Word* we also find: "And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 23).

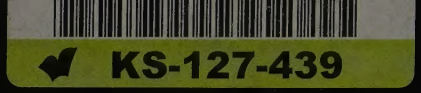
Carnal love will behold sin through the fingers; but the love of God will reprove the same. Carnal love, when it comes to the garment spotted by the flesh, to undo the old man with his works, and to go into death with the carnal members, uses a language similar to Peter's in his time, when he said to Jesus who spoke about his death: "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee". But the godly love in a soul, therein wants to follow the master, even as it were, in suffering death in order to die to sin, and in mortifying the sinful members in the flesh, like he, because of our sins, had to die.

It is very desirable, yea vitally essential, that the Church of God may also become more known by this fruit, to have more of godly and less of carnal love. Fleshly love towards the children in many a home, is the cause of many a fruit which clearly testifies of love for the world, instead of creating an honor to the Lord and his Church. For when the Teaching of Christ and His apostles commands that believing servants themselves (Ministerial staff) shall in all points adorn the doctrine of God our Savior, how much then should it behoove the childen of the faithful to do the same. Through the carnality of many parents towards their children much slander comes over the Church. For as is well known, such households are being taken by church-observers as a scale for the whole Church, to judge the same

thereby. O Lord! Fulfill the word of Thy promise, over Thy covenant people also in this present time, even as Thy mouth through the prophet hath spoken, and said: ". . .they shall be my people and I will be their God; And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me" (Jeremiah 32:38-40).

May God bless this work, that is my prayer.

Peter Toews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